

Ways God May Reveal His Will, Part 3 - Acts 21:9-11 – July 5th, 2009

- This is pt 3 of a series titled; "Ways God May Reveal His Will." For the last two weeks, we've looked at four ways God shows us His will.

1. Through difficulty and hardship (Verses 1-3)

- Not only was their departure difficult when they tore themselves away, the ensuing journey on a cargo ship was riddled with uncertainty.

2. Through the Spirit's urging (Verse 4)

- We're told that the disciples they stayed with while the ship was unloaded; "through the Spirit ...urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

3. Through corporate prayer (Verses 5-6)

- Luke records an interesting detail about how all the disciples with their wives and children kneel on the beach and pray together.

4. Through loving fellowship (Verses 7-8)

- It's interesting that Paul stays at Philip's house. This Philip was one of the seven who was there when Saul authorized Stephen's death.
- Philip knew Saul, now Paul, welcoming him in loving fellowship in his home. Now, God is going to reveal Himself to Paul while there.
- Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, because if you follow Philip's life you will find he was a man of God, who was greatly used of God.

"Philip was a dedicated worker in the church (Acts 6), a dynamic preacher in the world (Acts 8), and now a devoted father in the home."

Jon Courson

- Again, this shouldn't come as any surprise. We'll now be introduced to Philip's four daughters. They're godly, with integrity and purity.

5. Through a life of purity (Verse 9)

9 He had **four unmarried daughters who prophesied.**

v9 Luke, by the Holy Spirit, tells us that all four of Philip's daughters were pure, in that they were all virgins, and that all four prophesied.

"The daughters, or at least some of them, lived to a great age, and were highly esteemed as informants on persons and events belonging to the early years of Judean Christianity."

F.F. Bruce

- I suggest to you that there is a link here that we would be grossly remiss if we didn't both see it, and connect the dots because of it.

- Here it is; "God will reveal His will to and through one whose life is marked by a godly integrity and purity." Consider Proverbs 11:3:

Proverbs 11:3 The **integrity** (Toomah/Thumim) of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

- The word integrity in the Old Testament Hebrew, is "Toomah" where we get the "Thummim" of the High Priest's breastplate of decision.

- In other words, in order for the High Priest to know what God's will was for them, they would use the Urim and Thummim to guide them.

Exodus 28:30 Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD. NIV

- Let me take it a step further by looking at the antithesis of this; "God won't show me what to do, if I have no integrity to follow through."

- I believe that Philip modeled this for his daughters. One has to look no further than when God revealed his will to him to go to Gaza.

Acts 8:26-31 26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road-the desert road-that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." 30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. 31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. NIV

- God showed Philip His will, because he knew Philip would obey. Jesus said that He will reveal Himself to those who love and obey Him.

John 14:21 The person who has My commands and keeps them is the one who [really] loves Me; and whoever [really] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I [too] will love him and **will show (reveal, manifest) Myself to him.** [I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.] AMP

- Perhaps I can say it this way; "show me one whose heart is pure before God, and I'll show you one whose been shown the will of God."

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. NIV

James 3:17-18 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. NIV

6. Through a prophetic word (Verses 10-11)

10 After we had been there a number of days, **a prophet named Agabus** came down from Judea. 11 Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

v10 We're introduced to a prophet named Agabus, and it appears that he makes a special trip from Judea to meet with and warn Paul.

v11 Agabus does what Old Testament prophet's like Ezekiel and Jeremiah did and dramatically illustrates a prophecy concerning Paul.

- I'm sure he had everyone's attention when he takes Paul's belt, ties his own hands and feet, then proclaims what the Holy Spirit says!

- Agabus had what's known as "the gift prophecy." This is one of the gifts listed in the Apostle Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, **to another prophecy**, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. NIV

1 Corinthians 14:1-5 1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. 2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. 3 But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. 4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. 5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified. NIV

- It's interesting to note; this isn't the first time Paul would hear a prophetic word through Agabus. The last time was back in Antioch.

Acts 11:27-30 27 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29 The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. 30 This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. NIV

- The prophetic word the Holy Spirit does speak through Agabus, did come to pass then, and will come to pass even now as we'll see.
- This brings up a couple of questions, the first of which is this; "Does God still speak using the "Gift of Prophecy." The answer is "Yes!"
- Time does not permit me to go into the Biblical reasons why the gifts have not ceased however; I would like to recommend a book.

- Pastor Chuck Smith has written, what I believe is the best work on the Gifts of the Spirit, titled; "Living Water." Here's a short excerpt:

Did the Gifts Cease? There are those who say that the miraculous manifestations of God ceased with the apostles. They believe God gave the early church this supernatural power and these extraordinary manifestations to help get it started in a world that was antagonistic toward Jesus Christ. Because they did not have seminaries and great cathedrals, they needed a little boost to get started. These people say that now that we have great educational facilities and are well organized, we no longer need these divine manifestations of the Spirit. We can intellectually challenge unbelievers, and we can use our apologetics to convince the world of its need for Jesus Christ. That might sound good in theory, but it hasn't worked out in practice. Pastor Chuck Smith, "Living Water"

- The second question that all of this may bring up is this; "how do I know if I have been given a "word of prophecy?" The answer is yes!
- Let me explain it this way. If you are the recipient of a prophetic word, and it's according to the Word, and comes to pass, then it's God.
- Conversely, if a spoken word contradicts the written Word, it's not God. Like with an airplane, if you don't have both wings, it won't fly.